

SONGS OF PEACE

BY

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY LORD DUNSANY

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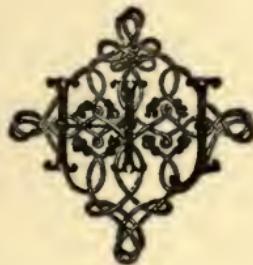
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IN this selection that Corporal Ledwidge has asked me to make from his poems I have included "A Dream of Artemis," though it was incomplete and has been hurriedly finished. Were it not included on that account many lines of extraordinary beauty would remain unseen. He asked me if I did not think that it ended too abruptly, but so many pleasant things ended abruptly in the summer of 1914, when this poem was being written, that the blame for that may rest on a meaner, though more exalted, head than that of the poet.

In this poem, as in the other one that has a classical theme, "The Departure of Proserpine," those who remember their classics may find faults, but I read the "Dream of Artemis" merely as an expression of things that the poet has seen and dreamed in Meath, including a most beautiful description of a fox-hunt in

the north of the county, in which he has probably taken part on foot; and in "The Departure of Proserpine," whether conscious or not, a crystallization in verse of an autumnal mood induced by falling leaves and exile and the possible nearness of death.

The second poem in the book was written about a little boy who used to drive cows for some farmer past the poet's door very early every morning, whistling as he went, and who died just before the war. I think that its beautiful and spontaneous simplicity would cost some of our writers gallons of midnight oil.

Of the next, "To a Distant One," who will not hope that when "Fame and other little things are won" its clear and confident prophecy will be happily fulfilled?

Quite perfect, if my judgment is of any value, is the little poem on page 53, "In the Mediterranean—Going to the War."

Another beautiful thing is "Homecoming" on page 70.

"The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill,
Flock by flock and fleece by fleece."

One feels that the Greeks are of some use, after all, to have inspired—with the help of their sheep—so lovely a poem.

“The Shadow People” on page 83 seems to me another perfect poem. Written in Serbia and Egypt, it shows the poet still looking steadfastly at those fields, though so far distant then, of which he was surely born to be the singer. And this devotion to the fields of Meath that, in nearly all his songs, from such far places brings his spirit home, like the instinct that has been given to the swallows, seems to be the key-note of the book. For this reason I have named it *Songs of Peace*, in spite of the circumstances under which they were written.

There follow poems at which some may wonder: “To Thomas McDonagh,” “The Blackbirds,” “The Wedding Morning”; but rather than attribute curious sympathies to this brave young Irish soldier I would ask his readers to consider the irresistible attraction that a lost cause has for almost any Irishman.

Once the swallow instinct appears again—in the poem called “The Lure”—and a longing

for the South, and again in the poem called "Song": and then the Irish fields content him again, and we find him on the last page but one in the book making a poem for a little place called Faughan, because he finds that its hills and woods and streams are unsung. Surely for this if there be, as many believed, gods lesser than Those whose business is with destiny, thunder and war, small gods that haunt the groves, seen only at times by few, and then indistinctly at evening, surely from gratitude they will give him peace.

DUNSANY

CONTENTS

AT HOME

	PAGE
A DREAM OF ARTEMIS	15
A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING	30

IN BARRACKS

TO A DISTANT ONE	35
THE PLACE	37
MAY	39
TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR	41

IN CAMP

CREWBAWN	45
EVENING IN ENGLAND	46

AT SEA

CROCKNAHARNA	51
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—GOING TO THE WAR	53
THE GARDENER	54

CONTENTS

IN SERBIA

	PAGE
AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA	59
NOCTURNE	61
SPRING AND AUTUMN	63

IN GREECE

THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE	67
THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP	70
WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER AWAY	72

IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT

MY MOTHER	77
SONG	79
TO ONE DEAD	80
THE RESURRECTION	82
THE SHADOW PEOPLE	83

IN BARRACKS

AN OLD DESIRE	87
THOMAS McDONAGH	88
THE WEDDING MORNING	89
THE BLACKBIRDS	91
THE LURE	93
THRO' BOGAC BAN	95

CONTENTS

II

	PAGE
FATE	9
EVENING CLOUDS	98
SONG	100
THE HERONS	101
IN THE SHADOWS	102
THE SHIPS OF ARCADY	103
AFTER	105
TO ONE WEEPING	106
A DREAM DANCE	107
BY FAUGHAN	108
IN SEPTEMBER	110

AT HOME

A DREAM OF ARTEMIS

THERE was soft beauty on the linnet's tongue
To see the rainbow's coloured bands arch wide.
The thunder darted his red fangs among
South mountains, but the East was like a
bride
Drest for the altar at her mother's door
Weeping between two loves. The fields were
pied
With May's munificence of flowers, that wore
The fashion of the days when Eve was young,
God's kirtles, ere the first sweet summer died.
The blackbird in a thorn of waving white
Sang bouquets of small tunes that bid me turn
From twilight wanderings thro' some old
delight

I heard in my far memory making mourn.
Such music fills me with a joy half pain,
And beats a track across my life I spurn
In sober moments. Ah, this wandering brain
Could play its hurdy-gurdy all the night
To vagrant joys of days beyond the bourn.

I heard the river warble sweetly nigh
To meet the warm salt tide below the weir,
And saw a coloured line of cows pass by,—
And then a voice said quickly, “ Iris here ! ”
“ What message now hath Hera ? ” then I
woke,
An exile in Arcadia, and a spear
Flashed by me, and ten nymphs fleet-footed
broke
Out of the coppice with a silver cry,
Into the bow of lights to disappear.

For one blue minute then there was no sound
Save water-noise, slow round a rushy bend,
And bird-delight, and ripples on the ground
Of windy flowers that swelling would ascend
The coloured hill and break all beautiful
And, falling backwards, to the woods would
send

The full tide of their love. What soft moons pull
Their moving fragrance ? did I ask, and found
Sad Io in far Egypt met a friend.—

It was my body thought so, far away
In the grey future, not the wild bird tied
That is the wandering soul. Behind the day
We may behold thee, soft one, hunted wide
By the loud gadfly ; but the truant soul
Knows thee before thou lay by night's dark
side,

Wed to the dimness ; long before its dole

Was meted it, to be thus pound in clay
That daubs its whiteness and offends its pride.

There were loud questions in the rainbow's end,
And hurried answers, and a sound of spears.
And through the yellow blaze I saw one bend
Down on a trembling white knee, and her tears
Fell down in globes of light, and her small
mouth

Was filled up with a name unspoken. Years
Of waiting love, and all their long, long drought
Of kisses parched her lips, and did she spend
Her eyes blue candles searching thro' her
fears.

“ She hath loved Ganymede, the stolen boy.”
Said one, and then another, “ Let us sing
To Zeus that he may give her living joy
Above Olympus, where the cool hill-spring

Of Lethe bubbles up to bathe the heart
Sorrow's lean fingers bruised. There eagles
wing
To eyries in the stars, and when they part
Their broad dark wings a wind is born to
buoy
The bee home heavy in the far evening."

HYMN TO ZEUS

" GOD, whose kindly hand doth sow
The rainbow showers on hill and lawn,
To make the young sweet grasses grow
And fill the udder of the fawn.
Whose light is life of leaf and flower,
And all the colours of the birds.
Whose song goes on from hour to hour
Upon the river's liquid words.

Reach out a golden beam of thine
And touch her pain. Your finger-tips
Do make the violets' blue eclipse
Like milk upon a daisy shine.

God, who lights the little stars,
And over night the white dew spills.
Whose hand doth move the season's cars
And clouds that mock our pointed hills.
Whose bounty fills the cow-trod wold,
And fills with bread the warm brown sod.
Who brings us sleep, where we grow old
'Til sleep and age together nod.

Reach out a beam and touch the pain
A heart has oozed thro' all the years.
Your pity dries the morning's tears
And fills the world with joy again ! ”

The rainbow's lights were shut, and all the
maids

Stood round the sad nymph in a snow-white
ring,

She rising spoke, "A blue and soft light
bathes

Me to the fingers. Lo, I upward swing!"

And round her fell a mantle of blue light.

"Watch for me on the forehead of evening."

And lifting beautiful went out of sight.

And all the flowers flowed backward from the
glades,

An ebb of colours redolent of Spring.

Beauty and Love are sisters of the heart,

Love has no voice, and Beauty whispered song.

Now in my own, drawn silently apart

Love looked, and Beauty sang. I felt a strong

Pulse on my wrist, a feeling like a pain
In my quick heart, for Love with gazes long
Was worshipping at Artemis, now lain
Among the heaving flowers . . . I longed to
 dart

And fold her to my breast, nor saw the wrong.
She lay there, a tall beauty by her spear,
Her kirtle falling to her soft round knee.
Her hair was like the day when evening's near,
And her moist mouth might tempt the golden
 bee.

Smile's creases ran from dimples pink and
 deep,
And when she raised her arms I loved to see
The white mounds of her muscles. Gentle
 sleep

Threatened her far blue looks. The noisy weir
Fell into a low murmuring lullaby.

And then the flowers came back behind the
heel

Of hunted Io: she, poor maid, had fear
Wide in her eyes looking half back to steal
A glimpse of the loud gadfly fiercely near.
In her right hand she held a slanting light,
And in her left her train. Artemis here
Raised herself on her palms, and took a white
Horn from her side and blew a silver peal
'Til three hounds from the coppice did appear.

The white nine left the spaces of flowers, and
now

Went calling thro' the wood the hunter's call.
Young echoes sleeping in the hollow bough
Took up the shouts and handed them to all
Their sisters of the crags, 'til all the day
Was filled with voices loud and musical.

I followed them across a tangled way
'Til the red deer broke out and took the brow
Of a wide hill in bounces like a ball.

Beside swift Artemis I joined the chase ;
We roused up kine and scattered fleecy flocks ;
Crossed at a mill a swift and bubbly race ;
Scaled in a wood of pine the knotty rocks ;
Past a grey vision of a valley town ;
Past swains at labour in their coloured frocks ;
Once saw a boar upon a windy down ;
Once heard a cradle in a lonely place,
And saw the red flash of a frightened fox.

We passed a garden where three maids in blue
Were talking of a queen a long time dead.
We caught a green glimpse of the sea : then
thro'
A town all hills ; now round a wood we sped

And killed our quarry in his native lair.

Then Artemis spun round to me and said,

“ Whence come you ? ” and I took her long
damp hair

And made a ball of it, and said, “ Where you
Are midnight’s dreams of love.” She dropped
her head,

No word she spoke, but, panting in her side,
I heard her heart. The trees were all at peace,
And lifting slowly on the grey evetide
A large and lovely star. Then to release
Her hair, my hand dropped to her girded
waist

And lay there shyly. “ O my love, the lease
Of your existence is for ever : taste
No less with me the love of earth,” I cried.

“ Though for so short a while on lands and
seas

Our mortal hearts know beauty, and overblow,
And we are dust upon some passing wind,
Dust and a memory. But for you the snow
That so long cloaks the mountains to the
knees

Is no more than a morning. It doth go
And summer comes, and leaf upon the trees :
Still you are fair and young, and nothing
find

In all man's story that seems long ago.
I have not loved on Earth the strife for gold,
Nor the great name that makes immortal
man,

But all that struggle upward to behold
What still is left of Beauty undisgraced,
The snowdrop at the heel of winter cold
And shivering, and the wayward cuckoo
chased

By lingering March, and, in the thunder's van
The poor lambs merry on the meagre wold,
By-ways and cast-off things that lie therein,
Old boots that trod the highways of the
world,
The schoolboy's broken hoop, the battered
bin
That heard the ragman's story, blackened
places
Where gipsies camped and circuses made
din,
Fast water and the melancholy traces
Of sea tides, and poor people madly whirled
Up, down, and through the black retreats of
sin.
These things a god might love, and stooping
bless
With benedictions of eternal song.—

But I have not loved Artemis the less
For loving these, but deem it noble love
To sing of live or dead things in distress
And wake memorial memories above.

Such is the soul that comes to plead with you
Oh, Artemis, to tend you in your needs.
At mornings I will bring you bells of dew
From honey places, and wild fish from streams
Flowing in secret places. I will brew
Sweet wine of alder for your evening dreams,
And pipe you music in the dusky reeds
When the four distances give up their blue.

And when the white procession of the stars
Crosses the night, and on their tattered wings,
Above the forest, cry the loud night-jars,
We'll hunt the stag upon the mountain-side,

Slipping like light between the shadow bars
'Til burst of dawn makes every distance wide.
Oh, Artemis—what grief the silence brings !
I hear the rolling chariot of Mars ! "

A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING

HE will not come, and still I wait.

He whistles at another gate

Where angels listen. Ah, I know

He will not come, yet if I go

How shall I know he did not pass

Barefooted in the flowery grass ?

The moon leans on one silver horn

Above the silhouettes of morn,

And from their nest sills finches whistle

Or stooping pluck the downy thistle.

How is the morn so gay and fair

Without his whistling in its air ?

The world is calling, I must go.

How shall I know he did not pass

Barefooted in the shining grass ?

IN BARRACKS

TO A DISTANT ONE

THROUGH wild by-ways I come to you, my love,
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,
What way I turn I cannot go astray
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may
prove
A tardy guide she will not make delay
Leading me through strange seas and distant
lands,
I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.
We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,
In my life's space that I perforce did leave
Love at the moonlit trysting-place to grieve
Till fame and other little things were won.

I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,
Far will I wander yet with much to do.
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song
To one whose harp had suffered many a wrong
In the lean hands of Pain. And when the
broods
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you :—
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue
Strong as the spring is strong.

THE PLACE

BLOSSOMS as old as May I scatter here,
And a blue wave I lifted from the stream.
It shall not know when winter days are drear
Or March is hoarse with blowing. But a-dream
The laurel boughs shall hold a canopy
Peacefully over it the winter long,
Till all the birds are back from oversea,
And April rainbows win a blackbird's song.

And when the war is over I shall take
My lute a-down to it and sing again
Songs of the whispering things amongst the
brake,
And those I love shall know them by their
strain.

Their airs shall be the blackbird's twilight song,
Their words shall be all flowers with fresh dews
hoar.—

But it is lonely now in winter long,
And, God ! to hear the blackbird sing once
more.

MAY

SHE leans across an orchard gate somewhere,
Bending from out the shadows to the light,
A dappled spray of blossom in her hair
Studded with dew-drops lovely from the night.
She smiles to think how many hearts she'll
smite

With beauty ere her robes fade from the lawn.
She hears the robin's cymbals with delight,
The skylark in the rosebush of the dawn.

For her the cowslip rings its yellow bell,
For her the violets watch with wide blue eyes.
The wandering cuckoo doth its clear name tell
Thro' the white mist of blossoms where she lies

Painting a sunset for the western skies.
You'd know her by her smile and by her tear
And by the way the swift and martin flies,
Where she is south of these wild days and
drear.

TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR

I'D make my heart a harp to play for you
Love songs within the evening dim of day,
Were it not dumb with ache and with mildew
Of sorrow withered like a flower away.
It hears so many calls from homeland places,
So many sighs from all it will remember,
From the pale roads and woodlands where
your face is
Like laughing sunlight running thro' December.

But this it singeth loud above its pain,
To bring the greater ache: whate'er befall
The love that oft-times woke the sweeter strain
Shall turn to you always. And should you call

To pity it some day in those old places
Angels will covet the loud joy that fills it.
But thinking of the by-ways where your face is
Sunlight on other hearts—Ah ! how it kills it.

IN CAMP

CREWBAWN

WHITE clouds that change and pass,
And stars that shine awhile,
Dew water on the grass,
A fox upon a stile.

A river broad and deep,
A slow boat on the waves,
My sad thoughts on the sleep
That hollows out the graves.

EVENING IN ENGLAND

FROM its blue vase the rose of evening drops.
Upon the streams its petals float away.
The hills all blue with distance hide their
tops
In the dim silence falling on the grey.
A little wind said " Hush ! " and shook a spray
Heavy with May's white crop of opening
bloom,
A silent bat went dipping up the gloom.

Night tells her rosary of stars full soon,
They drop from out her dark hand to her
knees.
Upon a silhouette of woods the moon

Leans on one horn as if beseeching ease
From all her changes which have stirred the
seas.

Across the ears of Toil Rest throws her veil,
I and a marsh bird only make a wail.

AT SEA

D

CROCKNAHARNA

ON the heights of Crocknaharna,
(Oh, the lure of Crocknaharna)
On a morning fair and early
Of a dear remembered May,
There I heard a colleen singing
In the brown rocks and the grey.
She, the pearl of Crocknaharna,
Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna,
Wild with girls is Crocknaharna
Twenty hundred miles away.

On the heights of Crocknaharna,
(Oh, thy sorrow Crocknaharna)
On an evening dim and misty
Of a cold November day,

There I heard a woman weeping
In the brown rocks and the grey.
Oh, the pearl of Crocknaharna
(Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna),
Black with grief is Crocknaharna
Twenty hundred miles away.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—GOING
TO THE WAR

LOVELY wings of gold and green
Flit about the sounds I hear,
On my window when I lean
To the shadows cool and clear.

Roaming, I am listening still,
Bending, listening overlong,
In my soul a steadier will,
In my heart a newer song.

THE GARDENER

AMONG the flowers, like flowers, her slow
hands move
Easing a muffled bell or stooping low
To help sweet roses climb the stakes above,
Where pansies stare and seem to whisper
“ Lo ! ”
Like gaudy butterflies her sweet peas blow
Filling the garden with dim rustlings. Clear
On the sweet Book she reads how long ago
There was a garden to a woman dear.

She makes her life one grand beatitude
Of Love and Peace, and with contented eyes
She sees not in the whole world mean or rude,
And her small lot she trebly multiplies.

And when the darkness muffles up the skies
Still to be happy is her sole desire,
She sings sweet songs about a great emprise,
And sees a garden blowing in the fire.

IN SERBIA

AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA

ALL the thin shadows
Have closed on the grass,
With the drone on their dark wings
The night beetles pass.
Folded her eyelids,
A maiden asleep,
Day sees in her chamber
The pallid moon peep.

From the bend of the briar
The roses are torn,
And the folds of the wood tops
Are faded and worn.

A strange bird is singing
Sweet notes of the sun,
Tho' song time is over
And Autumn begun.

NOCTURNE

THE rim of the moon
Is over the corn.
The beetle's drone
Is above the thorn.
Grey days come soon
And I am alone ;
Can you hear my moan
Where you rest, Aroon ?

When the wild tree bore
The deep blue cherry,
In night's deep hall
Our love kissed merry.

But you come no more
Where its woodlands call,
And the grey days fall
On my grief, Astore !

SPRING AND AUTUMN

GREEN ripples singing down the corn,
With blossoms dumb the path I tread,
And in the music of the morn
One with wild roses on her head.

Now the green ripples turn to gold
And all the paths are loud with rain,
I with desire am growing old
And full of winter pain.

IN GREECE

THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE

OLD mother Earth for me already grieves,
Her morns wake weeping and her noons are
dim,

Silence has left her woods, and all the leaves
Dance in the windy shadows on the rim
Of the dull lake thro' which I soon shall pass

To my dark bridal bed

Down in the hollow chambers of the dead.

Will not the thunder hide me if I call,

Wrapt in the corner of some distant star

The gods have never known ?

Alas ! alas !

My voice has left with the last wing, my fall
Shall crush the flowery fields with gloom, as
far

As swallows fly.

Would I might die

And in a solitude of roses lie

As the last bud's outblown.

Then nevermore Demeter would be heard

Wail in the blowing rain, but every shower

Would come bound up with rainbows to the

birds

Wrapt in a dusty wing, and the dry flower

Hanging a shrivelled lip.

This weary change from light to darkness fills

My heart with twilight, and my brightest day

Dawns over thunder and in thunder spills

Its urn of gladness

With a sadness

Through which the slow dews drip

And the bat goes over on a thorny wing.

Is it a dream that once I used to sing

From Ægean shores across her rocky isles,
Making the bells of Babylon to ring
Over the wiles
That lifted me from darkness to the Spring?

And the King
Seeing his wine in blossom on the tree
Danced with the queen a merry roundelay,
And all the blue circumference of the day
Was loud with flying song.—
—But let me pass along:
What brooks it the unfree to thus delay?
No secret turning leads from the gods' way.

THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP

THE sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill !
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the pathways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low
Merry boys with shouldered crooks
Close them in a single row,
Shout among them as they go
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.
Such delight you never know
Reading it from gilded books.

Before the early stars are bright
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,
And the moon comes large and white
Filling with a lovely light
The ferny curtained waterfall.
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight
And the climbing moon grows small.

WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER AWAY

WHEN Love and Beauty wander away,
And there's no more hearts to be sought and
won,
When the old earth limps thro' the dreary day,
And the work of the Seasons cry undone :
Ah ! what shall we do for a song to sing,
Who have known Beauty, and Love, and
Spring ?

When Love and Beauty wander away,
And a pale fear lies on the cheeks of youth,
When there's no more goal to strive for and
pray,

And we live at the end of the world's untruth :
Ah ! what shall we do for a heart to prove,
Who have known Beauty, and Spring, and
Love ?

IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT



MY MOTHER

GOD made my mother on an April day,
From sorrow and the mist along the sea,
Lost birds' and wanderers' songs and ocean
spray,
And the moon loved her wandering jealously.

Beside the ocean's din she combed her hair,
Singing the nocturne of the passing ships,
Before her earthly lover found her there
And kissed away the music from her lips.

She came unto the hills and saw the change
That brings the swallow and the geese in turns.
But there was not a grief she deeméd strange,
For there is that in her which always mourns.

Kind heart she has for all on hill or wave
Whose hopes grew wings like ants to fly away.
I bless the God Who such a mother gave
This poor bird-hearted singer of a day.

SONG

NOTHING but sweet music wakes
My Beloved, my Beloved.
Sleeping by the blue lakes,
My own Beloved !

Song of lark and song of thrush,
My Beloved ! my Beloved !
Sing in morning's rosy bush,
My own Beloved !

When your eyes dawn blue and clear,
My Beloved ! my Beloved !
You will find me waiting here,
My own Beloved !

TO ONE DEAD

A BLACKBIRD singing
On a moss upholstered stone,
Bluebells swinging,
Shadows wildly blown,
A song in the wood,
A ship on the sea.
The song was for you
And the ship was for me.

A blackbird singing
I hear in my troubled mind,
Bluebells swinging
I see in a distant wind.

But sorrow and silence
Are the wood's threnody,
The silence for you
And the sorrow for me.

THE RESURRECTION

My true love still is all that's fair,
She is flower and blossom blowing free,
For all her silence lying there
She sings a spirit song to me.

New lovers seek her in her bower,
The rain, the dew, the flying wind,
And tempt her out to be a flower,
Which throws a shadow on my mind.



THE SHADOW PEOPLE

OLD lame Bridget doesn't hear
Fairy music in the grass
When the gloaming's on the mere
And the shadow people pass :
Never hears their slow grey feet
Coming from the village street
Just beyond the parson's wall,
Where the clover globes are sweet
And the mushroom's parasol
Opens in the moonlit rain.
Every night I hear them call
From their long and merry train.
Old lame Bridget says to me,
" It is just your fancy, child."

She cannot believe I see
Laughing faces in the wild,
Hands that twinkle in the sedge
Bowing at the water's edge
Where the finny minnows quiver,
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge
Bubble foam to sail the river.
And the sunny hands to me
Beckon ever, beckon ever.
Oh ! I would be wild and free
And with the shadow people be.

IN BARRACKS

AN OLD DESIRE

I SEARCHED thro' memory's lumber-room
And there I found an old desire,
I took it gently from the gloom
To cherish by my scanty fire.

And all the night a sweet-voiced one,
Sang of the place my loves abide,
'Til Earth leaned over from the dawn
And hid the last star in her side.

And often since, when most alone,
I ponder on my old desire,
But never hear the sweet-voiced one,
And there are ruins in my fire.

THOMAS McDONAGH

HE shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

THE WEDDING MORNING

SPREAD the feast, and let there be
Such music heard as best beseems
A king's son coming from the sea
To wed a maiden of the streams.

Poets, pale for long ago,
Bring sweet sounds from rock and flood,
You by echo's accent know
Where the water is and wood.

Harpers whom the moths of Time
Bent and wrinkled dusty brown,
Her chains are falling with a chime,
Sweet as bells in Heaven town.

But, harpers, leave your harps aside,
And, poets, leave awhile your dreams.
The storm has come upon the tide
And Cathleen weeps among her streams.

THE BLACKBIRDS

I HEARD the Poor Old Woman say :

“ At break of day the fowler came,
And took my blackbirds from their songs
Who loved me well thro’ shame and blame.

No more from lovely distances
Their songs shall bless me mile by mile,
Nor to white Ashbourne call me down
To wear my crown another while.

With bended flowers the angels mark
For the skylark the place they lie,
From there its little family
Shall dip their wings first in the sky.

And when the first surprise of flight
Sweet songs excite, from the far dawn
Shall there come blackbirds loud with love,
Sweet echoes of the singers gone.

But in the lonely hush of eve
Weeping I grieve the silent bills.”
I heard the Poor Old Woman say
In Derry of the little hills.

THE LURE

I SAW night leave her halos down
On Mitylene's dark mountain isle,
The silhouette of one fair town
Like broken shadows in a pile.
And in the farther dawn I heard
The music of a foreign bird.

In fields of shady angles now
I stand and dream in the half dark :
The thrush is on the blossomed bough,
Above the echoes sings the lark,
And little rivers drop between
Hills fairer than dark Mitylene.

Yet something calls me with no voice
And wakes sweet echoes in my mind ;
In the fair country of my choice
Nor Peace nor Love again I find,
Nor anything of rest I know
When south-east winds are blowing low.

THRO' BOGAC BAN

I MET the Silent Wandering Man,
Thro' Bogac Ban he made his way,
Humming a slow old Irish tune,
On Joseph Plunkett's wedding day.

And all the little whispering things
That love the springs of Bogac Ban,
Spread some new rumour round the dark
And turned their faces from the dawn.

My hand upon my harp I lay,
I cannot say what things I know ;
To meet the Silent Wandering Man
Of Bogac Ban once more I go.

FATE

LUGH made a stir in the air
With his sword of cries,
And fairies thro' hidden ways
Came from the skies,
And their spells withered up the fair
And vanquished the wise.

And old lame Balor came down
With his gorgon eye
Hidden behind its lid,
Old, withered and dry.
He looked on the wattle town,
And the town passed by.

These things I know in my dreams,
The crying sword of Lugh,
And Balor's ancient eye
Searching me through,
Withering up my songs
And my pipe yet new.

EVENING CLOUDS

A LITTLE flock of clouds go down to rest
In some blue corner off the moon's highway,
With shepherd winds that shook them in the
West
To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array,
Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons
Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has
made
A little England full of lovely noons,
Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that
isle
Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not
failed,

What he loved most ; for late I roamed awhile
Thro' English fields and down her rivers sailed ;
And they remember him with beauty caught
From old desires of Oriental Spring
Heard in his heart with singing overwrought ;
And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing.

SONG

THE winds are scented with woods after rain,
And a raindrop shines in the daisy's eye.
Shall we follow the swallow again, again,
Ah ! little yearning thing, you and I ?

You and I to the South again,
And heart ! Oh, heart, how you shall sigh,
For the kind soft wind that follows the rain,
And the raindrop shed from the daisy's eye.

THE HERONS

As I was climbing Ardan Mor
From the shore of Sheelan lake,
I met the herons coming down
Before the water's wake.

And they were talking in their flight
Of dreamy ways the herons go
When all the hills are withered up
Nor any waters flow.

IN THE SHADOWS

THE silent music of the flowers
Wind-mingled shall not fail to cheer
The lonely hours
When I no more am here.

Then in some shady willow place
Take up the book my heart has made,
And hide your face
Against my name which was a shade.

THE SHIPS OF ARCADY

THRO' the faintest filigree
Over the dim waters go
Little ships of Arcady
When the morning moon is low.

I can hear the sailors' song
From the blue edge of the sea,
Passing like the lights along
Thro' the dusky filigree.

Then where moon and waters meet
Sail by sail they pass away,
With little friendly winds replete
Blowing from the breaking day.

And when the little ships have flown,
Dreaming still of Arcady
I look across the waves, alone
In the misty filigree.

AFTER

AND in the after silences
Of flower-lit distances I'll be,
And who would find me travels far
In lands unsung of minstrelsy.

Strong winds shall cross my secret way,
And planet mountains hide my goal,
I shall go on from pass to pass,
By monstrous rocks, a lonely soul.

TO ONE WEEPING

MAIDEN, these are sacred tears,
Let me not disturb your grief;
Had I but your bosom's fears
I should weep, nor seek relief.

My woe is a silent woe
'Til I give it measured rhyme,
When the blackbird's flute is low
In my heart at singing time.

A DREAM DANCE

MAEVE held a ball on the dún,
Cuculain and Eimer were there,
In the light of an old broken moon
I was dancing with Deirdre the fair

How loud was the laughter of Finn
As he blundered about thro' a reel,
Tripping up Caoilte the thin,
Or jostling the dreamy Aleel.

And when the dance ceased for a song,
How sweet was the singing of Fand,
We could hear her far, wandering along,
My hand in that beautiful hand.

BY FAUGHAN

FOR hills and woods and streams unsung
I pipe above a rippled cove.
And here the weaver autumn hung
Between the hills a wind she wove
From sounds the hills remember yet
Of purple days and violet.

The hills stand up to trip the sky,
Sea-misted, and along the tops
Wing after wing goes summer by,
And many a little roadway stops
And starts, and struggles to the sea,
Cutting them up in filigree.

Twixt wind and silence Faughan flows,
In music broken over rocks,
Like mingled bells the poet knows
Ring in the fields of Eastern flocks.
And here this song for you I find
Between the silence and the wind.

IN SEPTEMBER

STILL are the meadowlands, and still
Ripens the upland corn,
And over the brown gradual hill
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown
With silent hearts now call,
My rose of youth is overblown
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds
That leave the rain and grey,
I hear the music of the words
My lute can never say.

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